



Review of July 2006 heat wave related fatalities in California

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Abstract:

This review is based on two sources. The first source is a case-series study of 140 deaths* identified by California county coroners and medical examiners as “heat related” (HR) from July 15 to August 1, 2006. Coroners and medical examiners provided copies of death certificates, investigation narratives, and autopsy reports with toxicology findings. The investigators (Thomas Kim, M.D. and Roger Trent, Ph.D.) consider the findings reliable but not final. This document summarizes the preliminary findings, and is not a detailed discussion of all aspects of the investigation or a detailed chronicle of all known aspects of the deaths. Analysis of this California case series continues. The second source is a literature review of 26 studies of HR morbidity and mortality from the United States, Europe, and Australia. The review is the work of Thomas Kim, M.D. and Kathleen Fitzsimmons, M.P.H. Any findings of the California study that appear to be new or different from findings in the literature are emphasized. A working hypothesis was that heat related deaths in California might differ from those in other places, especially parts of the United States and Europe with generally higher humidity and differences in demographics, activity patterns, the number of microclimates, and other factors. By looking at both past research and the California case series findings, we aimed to ground the assessment of the Draft Plan in data that are comprehensive as well as germane to California’s experience in last summer’s heat wave. This document describes the main factors in HR illness and deaths, and opportunities for prevention. All the data graphs and tables come from the California case series. At the end, we provide conclusions based on our findings about these main factors.

Source: <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/injviosa/ Documents/HeatPlanAssessment-EPIC.pdf>

Resource Description

Exposure :

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Meteorological Factors, Temperature

Temperature: Extreme Heat

Geographic Feature:

resource focuses on specific type of geography

None or Unspecified

Geographic Location:

Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal



resource focuses on specific location

United States

Health Impact:

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Injury, Other Health Impact

Other Health Impact: heat related morbidity and mortality

Mitigation/Adaptation:

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

Population of Concern: A focus of content

Population of Concern:

populations at particular risk or vulnerability to climate change impacts

Children, Elderly

Resource Type:

format or standard characteristic of resource

Research Article

Timescale:

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified

Vulnerability/Impact Assessment:

resource focus on process of identifying, quantifying, and prioritizing vulnerabilities in a system

A focus of content